



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2009

No. 40

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 6, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DIANA DEGETTE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord our God, by Your inspiration You draw all toward the light. By Your penetrating grace You sustain us and encourage us to the end.

A common religious practice is to join others in a pilgrimage. Moving together to a common destination may uncover many a pilgrim story. An historic reenactment or a visit to a shrine brings to life again the powerful memory of that first epic journey.

Being on a pilgrimage combines the diversity of motivations into a single purpose. Focused on a common goal, discoveries are made all along the route and a sense of community lifts everyone with the final energy to attain the ascent.

Lord, human life itself is a pilgrimage. As a mental paradigm, pilgrimage can transform weeks of a season, or an academic semester, even a session of Congress, as long as all participants fix their eyes on the prize and help each other give You the glory every step of the way until the final goal is reached. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING).

Mr. FLEMING led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GIVING EVERY AMERICAN THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, yesterday President Obama had a health care summit which I attended, and I must say it was really a great bipartisan opportunity. Essentially on both sides of the aisle Members said that we need health care reform and that we need it now. There may be disagreement about how to achieve that, but everyone agrees this is not something that can be delayed, but needs to be addressed now.

I would also mention there were many people from the business community there, many of those who you might think would not necessarily be interested in reform on this subject. There were insurance companies. There were representatives from NFIB and some of the other business groups. So there is no question in my mind that there is consensus about the need for health care reform.

One of the ways that was stressed to achieve that was through cost efficiency. There is actually too much money being spent in many ways in not an efficient way; wellness, prevention, comparative effectiveness, new ways of doing things like health information technology to be more effective and utilizing cost measures or efficiencies to bring costs down, and with that money, as well as a new source of revenue, to be able to expand health care so that every American has health insurance.

ENERGY MEANS JOBS

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Madam Speaker, in northwest Louisiana energy means

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H3057

jobs. However, the President's recent budget proposal will eliminate more than \$31.5 billion in tax incentives for oil and gas businesses, the vast majority of which are mom and pop businesses.

The loss of depletion allowance and the writeoff of intangible drilling costs will effectively shut down all future drilling for the majority of wells drilled in the continental United States. In a business that is so risky, what is the incentive now to take a risk?

It is the wildcat driller's rugged individualism that has made this industry what it is today, keeping our gas prices and the cost of heating our homes as low as it is today. It could be much higher.

Independent oil men and women in Northwest Louisiana rely on drilling tax incentives to reinvest capital in their companies and hire employees at good salaries. This legislation will drastically hurt small oil and gas business owners in my district and result in major layoffs of personnel.

Less domestic production means more imports, price spikes for consumers at the pump and an increased threat to our national security. Let's take this dangerous anti-jobs and anti-consumer provision out of the budget bill today.

SUPPORT THE MCGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, there are over 900 million people on this planet who are hungry. Over 300 million of them are children. Of those children, about half do not go to school.

What we have learned over the years is if we introduce a meal in a school setting, more kids will go to school and more girls will go to school. We have learned that in some of the most volatile parts of the world, parents send their kids to schools that preach religious intolerance not because they want to have their kids learn that, but because they want their kids to eat, and those schools offer a meal.

Today, Madam Speaker, I and a number of others are sending a letter to Secretary Vilsack asking this administration to fully fund the George McGovern-Robert Dole International School Feeding Program. It is our moral obligation, Madam Speaker, to help feed the world's hungry. It is also in our national security interest.

I hope all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join with me in supporting the McGovern-Dole School Feeding Program.

PROTECT TAXPAYERS AGAINST FRAUD

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, yesterday Congress passed a housing bill that lacked a basic protection for American taxpayers. Republicans offered an amendment that would have prohibited anyone from receiving assistance under the bill if they misrepresented or lied about their income when applying for a mortgage. I had offered a similar amendment last week, but the majority refused to even consider it. They refused to apply this commonsense measure of protection for taxpayers who have already seen trillions of their dollars spent to bail out irresponsible behavior.

As a former real estate attorney, I have seen the tremendous benefits of homeownership. I have also seen the tragedy of foreclosure. No one is advocating that we do nothing. But it appears the good intentions have gotten in the way of good solutions, such as a \$15,000 home purchase tax credit proposed by the Homebuilders Association and Realtors Association. We have to stop rewarding bad behavior with the money of those who played by the rules.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS IN PAKISTAN

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, in the three times that I have visited Afghanistan, the commanders in charge of our military-NATO combined effort in Afghanistan have said to the delegation that their problem is across the border in Pakistan, that al Qaeda is not in Afghanistan other than at such times as when the Taliban brings them to engage our soldiers for practice and for training. Yet we see the government of Pakistan entering into an agreement with the Taliban in the Swat in the northern frontier areas of Pakistan to turn that rather large geographical area of Pakistan over to the Taliban and to dismantle the military presence in that area.

What we have seen since this agreement was reached, an accommodation to the Taliban, is that the training camps have expanded, people have been tortured and murdered, the military has removed from the area, checkpoints have been set up so that the Taliban can examine everybody who moves in and out of the area of whether they are pro-Taliban or anti-Taliban, and somehow we are told that this is good for Pakistan and this is good for America. It can't be, and we had better be careful before we send any more money to the Pakistani government.

DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR AMERICA

(Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, as Congress approaches the important work of writing a budget, let us remember our friends and neighbors who have lost their jobs and may be living on unemployment; small businesses that are making tough choices, laying people off, struggling to pay for health care and facing huge tax increases; retirees who have lost their significant savings.

Americans have always had a wonderful "can do" spirit. Americans understand responsibility and making sacrifices. Americans are hoping. They are hoping for leaders in Congress to work together and work hard to get the economy going. Back home, from Walla Walla to Colville, during a difficult time people come together to move a community forward.

History has proven that both parties through the years have good ideas, and House Republicans are calling upon President Obama to veto any spending bill that is not consistent with his commitment to fiscal responsibility and ensuring that spending commitments are paid for without burdening our children and grandchildren.

It is not about party, it is a matter of helping people focus on doing what is best for families, small businesses and the next generation and our future.

GRANTING DEFERRED ENFORCED DEPARTURE FOR LIBERIANS LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, temporary protective status for Liberians living in the United States will expire at the end of this month. In my district, the thriving Liberian community is on edge as this date draws closer. I know many of them personally. They have established homes, they have raised families, they have opened businesses and they have entered the fabric of our community.

While progress has been made in stabilizing Liberia in recent years, it remains a nation still recovering from civil war. Unemployment is near 80 percent. Democracy is in its early stages now, and we all know how challenging that process can be. Many of the same fears and concerns that brought thousands of Liberians here in the first place have not been alleviated.

Liberia is simply not ready to absorb the number of people who will be forced to leave the United States if this deadline is not extended. That is why I sent a letter to President Obama last month urging him to extend the deadline by